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ABSTRACT

Inviting policy development is an attempt to cordially summon those who are involved and affected by rules, codes, and procedures to understand and participate in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies. This paper first presents criteria for an invitational framework for policy development and then goes on to discuss the nature of public participation during each of the six characteristic steps of policy analysis: problem definition, determination of evaluation criteria, identification of alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, comparison of alternatives, and assessment of outcomes. These criteria are then applied to three levels of educational policymaking: (1) inviting policy analysis in the classroom; (2) inviting policy analysis in the boardroom--expedient vs. participatory politics; and (3) inviting policy analysis at the provincial level. A short bibliography is included. (TE)

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Inviting policy development: From public relations to public creations

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Inviting policy development: From public relations to public creations

...It did more distance up and down,
Their little stormy ship, than on ...

Robert Frost, "The Discovery of
The Madeiras", 1949

It is understandable that during turbulent times educational policymakers are constantly occupied with keeping their ships afloat. Public relations efforts to convince the various "powers that be" that their educational institutions are sailing smoothly are a necessity. To this end, invitational education, with its emphasis on a positive approach to people, places, and programs, seems a natural. After all, who can really be opposed to inviting schools?

However, this paper will argue that invitational education needs to be much more than a public relations effort, much more than a ballast in the storm. It will argue that invitational education needs to serve as a compass and point beyond the storm. In order to do this we argue that invitational education needs to pay particular attention to the previously mentioned, but underdeveloped, notion of policy development. By making this move invitational education will have to look beyond the task of public relations to the challenge of public creations. With this in mind the first section of this paper will present criteria from an invitational framework for policy development. This will be followed in the next section by applying these criteria. to three levels of educational policy.

Part I: Criteria for inviting policy

The Second Edition of Inviting School Success (Purkey and Novak, 1984) stressed that "everybody and everything involved in the educative process can - and should - 'invite' school success" (p. 2). Differing from the first edition (Purkey, 1978), there was a recognition that the inviting theory of educational practice not only involved interpersonal practices but also included the development of particular types of places, programs, and policies. Although some work has been done on the development of places and programs, policies have been neglected.

Although policies involve rules, codes, and procedures (Purkey and Novak, 1984, p. 2) this is just the tip of the iceberg. Policy development looks beyond the actual policy statement to the process by which it is formulated, implemented, and evaluated. Product and process are not to be separated but need to be seen as an integral whole. Since invitational education is based on a 'doing with' philosophy, inviting policy development is an attempt to cordially summon those who are involved and affected by rules, codes, and procedures to understand and participate in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies. Potential participants need to have the opportunities and skills necessary to become educational publics. We see the development and participation of educational publics as the criteria for analyzing educational policies for their invitational qualities. This moves us well beyond the task of merely using some public relations techniques to soothe troubled waters. It takes us in the direction of inviting democratic participation on issues which are of substantial educational value to all involved.

Examining educational policies for their invitational qualities requires that we investigate and locate the creation and participation of educational publics in all phases of the policy-making process. While policy analysts do not always conduct their activities in strict accordance with all the systematic steps outlined in most policy models, there are generally six characteristic steps which define any policy analysis process. Patton and Sawicki (1986, p. 25) identify these as (1) problem definition, (2) determination of evaluation criteria, (3) identification of alternatives, (4) evaluation of alternatives, (5) comparison of alternatives and (6) assessment of outcomes. These stages may be subsumed under the familiar categories of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, which can also roughly correspond with the inviting skills of being ready, being with, and following through (Purkey and Novak, 1984, pp. 55-70).

Accepting the six steps of Patton and Sawicki (1986) to be generally representative of the educational policy analysis process, let us try to locate and determine the nature of the participation of educational publics within each stage. This should provide us with a fairly comprehensive diagnostic tool for examining the invitational characteristics of specific educational policies.

Problem Definition

This phase of policy formulation involves an educational public in the task of preparing themselves for future participation and debate on policy alternatives. An invitational stance implies that participants enter policy discussion with certain requisite knowledge, and a common understanding of the nature of the issue at hand. Part of being ready for formulating policy alternatives regarding a given problem

requires that differences with respect to defining the policy problem must be overcome through prior discussion. Failure to do so will result in a state of non-readiness or inability of participants to enter the later phase of intelligent-democratic decision-making which is the heart of the policy-making process. Engaging in debate over an issue that participants do not share a reasonably common definition of is wasteful, directionless and disinviting.

Moreover, being ready for policy analysis implies that an educational public in addition to engaging in the skills of mutual problem definition, should also research and examine the issue from past, present and future perspectives. It is these perspectives and the philosophical tenets on which they are based which help to determine the nature and definition of an issue. Alternative interpretations of these perspectives should also be acknowledged and examined. Individuals preparing themselves for an approach to a policy-making task should become aware of their own biases and those of others regarding the policy issue and of the potential effect of these perceptions influencing their later decision-making abilities.

The problem definition phase of policy formulation if practised in the spirit of the invitational notion of being ready, allows individuals comprising an educational public to approach the decision-making environment with a heightened awareness and comprehensive knowledge of the issue at hand. We argue that consequently they are better prepared for the complexity and sincerity needed to be together as decision-makers.

Determination of Evaluation Criteria

Setting the stage for policy formulation and the creation of

policy alternatives also implies that criteria be established to evaluate various options. An educational public preparing themselves for being together in a decision-making democratic process should come to a prior agreement on some of the possible means they can use to inform their judgements in selecting and defending policy options.

Being ready also implies that participants mutually generate and understand the varieties of evaluative tools that will guide their decision-making later in the policy formulation process. Samples of the most common evaluation criteria generated are notions of economic and/or political feasibility, cost/benefit analyses, degree of specifity of the policy statement, and perceived effect on the public etc. All of these types of evaluative tools may be brought to bear on the selection of a policy alternative but they should be mutually generated as evaluative criteria during the preparatory phases of policy-making by those participating in the policy-making public.

The invitational concept of being ready is still paramount during this phase of policy formulation. The following phases of the policy-making process rely more closely on the being with invitational skills.

Identification of Alternatives

An educational public democratically participating in this phase of policy development acts as a public to create and envision alternative solutions to a given problem. Being with one another in this task engages individuals in the reconstruction of their problem. Technical skills used in this reconstruction include such things as examining alternatives used in analogous situations, brainstorming, considering the possibility of maintaining the status quo, generating concepts of incremental change, and examining historical solutions to name a few.

Personal skills necessary to being with other participants in this reconstruction include the seven invitational subskills outlined by Purkey and Novak (1984, p. 58). Additionally however this sense of being with one another engaging in a democratic reconstructive process requires that individuals participating in such a public understand, value, and utilize the skills of rational judgement, persuasion, and debate.

An educational public mutually engaged in generating policy alternatives is immersed in an act of public creation requiring adherence and commitment to democratic principles of associated life. Positing a definition of a modern form of participatory democracy, Barber (1984) notes:

> It rests on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions rather than their altruism or their good nature. (p. 177)

Inherent in this notion of modern participatory democracy is the recognition by individuals that exercising social responsibility in a decision-making public involves those persons in such civic skills as rational judgement and persuasion. We argue that generating alternative solutions to a problem in the policy-making process may be considered an inviting phase of policy analysis to the degree that the public so engaged mutually creates in a strongly democratic mode. Being with one another in this mutually creating way also applies to the next phase of policy analysis which involves evaluating the alternatives that were generated.

Evaluate Alternative Policies

Being with one another in this process engages the individuals

of an educational public in discussion centering on the expected effects of each alternative previously generated. Additionally it involves them in some form of analyses to test these effects e.g. forecasting, cost-benefit analyses etc.

The invitational skills of being with others are still of paramount importance to this task. Individuals are involved in inviting policy analysis to the degree that they are still actively utilizing rational argument, persuasion, and sound judgement in an atmosphere of mutual sharing, concern, trust and respect. Inviting public participation in the next phase of the policy-making process deepens the level and intensity of persuasion and discussion.

Compare and Select Among Alternatives

This involves the public in discussion and comparative examination of alternatives and their anticipated effects with the aim of selecting a policy alternative to be converted into action. Technical skills used to accomplish this include such things as generating scenarios (which melds qualitative, quantitative and political analyses together) or listing alternatives and judging them by the degree to which they match the evaluative criteria. Being inviting in this phase involves summoning individuals to exercise judgement, argue rationally and reach some kind of consensus or agreement on the best possible alternatives so that the policy may then be converted into action. Decision-making during this phase often intensifies the possibilities for unbridled, irrational discourse and thus the invitational being with stance may need to be re-emphasized or brought clearly to the forefront of the particular public space encompassing an issue.

The policy-making process does not end however with the selection

of a particular solution to be transformed into a policy guide for action. Inviting policy analysis involves an educational public in the act of policy evaluation which equates roughly with the phase of invitational education known as following through.

Policy Evaluation

Assessing and monitoring policy outcomes is essential to invitational policy analysis. Public creation demands further ongoing participation in analyzing how appropriately the policy is solving the original problem. Following through discussions need to center on before and after comparisons and actual versus designed policy performance. Further debate on questions such as the following needs to occur.

Is the policy having the effect it was intended to have?

If not what is occurring?

Should the policy be revised? continued? discontinued?

Was the theoretical framework underlying the policy inappropriate in light of putting the policy into practise?

Policies created as dogmas to be blindly adhered to without continuing evaluation and re-creation or those created as vague generalizations incapable of being translated into action and consequently shelved are not inviting policies nor was their formation likely an inviting process.

The inviting criteria common to all stages of the policy analysis process is the notion of publics created and composed of individuals involved and affected by a particular problem working, discussing, debating with one another to solve the problem. They accomplish this by having the skills and opportunity to become a public - a necessary aim of education which needs reconstructing. We are reminded of the

words of Thomas Jefferson cited in Strong Democracy (Barber, 1984):

> I know of no safe depository of the ultimate power of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.

Essentially, Jefferson is talking about human potentialities, about the creation of a public comprising individuals who participate in the governance of their own lives - such an act of participation and its requisite skills being criteria for inviting policy development. Let us now examine how inviting criteria in policy development, implementation and evaluation may be applied to three levels of educational policy, (1) classroom policy, (2) school board policy, and (3) provincial policy.

Part II: Invitational policy development in practise

(a) Inviting policy analysis in the classroom

Is it possible for a class of students and a teacher to act as a self-governing community of citizens - a public, who deploy democracy as a way of living? A way of living that Barber (1984) defines as,

> ... the way that human beings with variable but malleable natures and with competing but overlapping interests can contrive to live together communally not only to their mutual advantage, but also to the advantage of their mutuality.

We believe that inviting students and teachers to create publics in their classrooms can be accomplished - that students working with their teacher can participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of classroom policies - that together they can create a classroom educational public.

For example, policies about a field trip curricula can be generated by both teachers and students participating in an educational

public. The class may, as a public, create a class field trip curricula for the year. Students and teachers as an educational public would participate using skills of debate, rational argument, persuasion, research, defining, decision-making, and evaluating to develop class policies regarding field-trip activities. Following the criteria outlined earlier it would involve them mutually in being ready, being with and following through in order to:

1. Discuss the nature of the problem, i.e. what the field trip program should consist of, and what the underlying purposes of the program should be based on. Consideration would be given to past experiences, current needs and future expectations.
2. Evolve criteria by which to judge the possibility of implementing the policy, i.e. can they legally go on an overnight camping trip according to School Board regulations?
3. Identify alternative policy options, i.e. types and locations of different possible field trips, their cost, and educational benefits.
4. Evaluate alternatives, i.e. compare, debate, and decide what the pros and cons of each suggested field trip activity are.
5. Compare, debate and reach a consensus on which field trips will be undertaken and at what cost and time and based on what rationale? What resources are necessary to make the field trip possible?
6. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of their field trip program giving consideration to how well the events actually met student needs as they were previously perceived and identified.

Teachers and students viewing one another as trustworthy, able, and responsible persons working to mutually benefit one another will enable the creation of an educational public capable of performing inviting policy analysis in the classroom.

(b) Inviting policy analysis in the boardroom - Expedient vs. participatory politics

Consider the following setting - a board of education meeting to propose that the ninth grades in a district be moved into the local senior high school as the first step in the creation of a middle school organizational structure. Inviting policy development would require that the public, composed of those affected by the policy, be involved in its formation. Input is generally sought via consultants from what are commonly referred to as interest groups. We argue that interest groups constitute the concerned public who must be cordially summoned to engage in the policymaking task as individuals who are both affected by the problem and its policy outcome and who are able, responsible citizens with the public skills of judgement and discourse necessary for policy development.

Rather than board members and the public being kept at a distance from one another throughout decision making - usually through the medium of professional consultants - inviting policy analysis encourages participatory democracy in a very strong sense of the words. Defining, implementing, and evaluating decisions regarding a policy of moving to a middle school structure implies the inclusion of, or representatives of, board members, parents, teachers, children, citizens, transportation officials, union representatives etc. who can operate with and through an inviting stance. The pluralistic perspectives needed to formulate accurate, comprehensive pictures of the policy in terms of historic

antecedents, current interpretations, and future expectations can only come from the inclusion in discussion of the various publics concerned.

There can be no question that full participatory democracy functioning in an educational policy development setting can be time-consuming and tedious. It is very difficult to do in times of constant crisis management. However, responsible, inviting change takes time. Public creations take time. It is a long-term goal we can approach a step at a time. Let us now examine how the public creations perspective can be used to analyze a larger policy issue.

c) Inviting policy analysis at the provincial level

On June 12, 1984 Premier William Davis unexpectedly announced in the Legislature a proposed bill that would provide full public funding to Ontario Roman Catholic Separate Secondary schools. At that time Roman Catholic schools were funded only up until the end of Grade 10. This policy had been followed since the acceptance of The Separate School Bill of 1863 which guaranteed in perpetuity the rights of parents to have their child educated in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. Failure to provide funding beyond Grade 10 flew contradictorily in the face of the 1863 Separate School Bill later incorporated into the British North America Act of 1867 which was the defacto constitution until 1981. Consequently Roman Catholics have claimed inequity in provincial funding for most of the last century. On July 4, 1985 Bill 30 was introduced to allow Roman Catholic Boards of Education to offer publicly supported education beyond Grade 10.

Leaving aside the substance of Bill 30, let's examine the formulation and implementation processes in terms of their ability to involve an informed public. Of primary importance is the fact that there was no

public discussion nor parliamentary opinion sought prior to the initial announcement in the Legislature by William Davis in 1984 - merely an announcement that the conversion process had begun, that it was a fait accompli.

Davis's proposal rather oddly met with no rebuttal or questioning of costs in the Legislature from either Liberal or New Democratic Party members. An election was pending and throughout its proceedings all party candidates remained silent on the issue. Defeat of the Conservatives passed implementation of the policy into Liberal hands. Teachers unions, church groups, boards of education and citizens by this time had begun to react.

Currently Bill 30 must await a ruling on its constitutionality within the bounds of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms before receiving third reading and becoming law. Mistrust among Separate and Public boards, teachers and students meanwhile has arisen. Funding and policy implementation costs have far exceeded the figures announced by Mr. Davis in the Legislature. The public has been given a policy, the formulation into which they had no input. A commission was set up to ensure public input into how best to implement the policy, but no one asked for public input into policy formulation or its rationale.

Referring to our comprehensive criteria for inviting policy analysis the Davis decision could have been a strongly democratically founded inviting policy if it had followed these suggested steps:

A. During policy definition and research stages:

- a public composed of representatives of all affected had participated in being ready and had

1. examined thoroughly and generated alternative definitions of the equality issue, i.e. resources needed to exercise rights

or "equal access" is different from "equal opportunity";

2. as accurately as possible researched the economic resources needed to implement the policy or established such feasibility as an evaluation criteria for comparing alternative policies generated. Forty million dollars was the price tag for implementation the first year (as presented by Mr. Davis to the Legislature). The actual cost has turned out to be $80 million for the first year of funding, $150 million for the second and $380 million projected for the third year. (Each year an additional grade will be funded.)

B. During generation of alternatives, evaluation criteria and policy formulation, a public composed of all affected or their representatives had participated in being with one another and

1. expedient decision making had been waived and public debate, issuance of white and green papers etc. had preceded legislation and implementation. A policy is now implemented in Ontario schools by Cabinet decree that is not a provincial education law;
2. public discussion was used to clarify for the purposes of Bill 30 consensus on such sensitive issues as non-Catholic teacher employment in the new system, mandatory religious instruction of non-Catholic students attending Catholic secondary schools etc. Covering these issues by rushing a Bill through the Legislature will not solve the need for these discussions to surface and be resolved.

C. During policy evaluation, a concerned and affected public had participated in following through. The public affected could have tried to establish appropriate evaluation criteria for

judging policy alternatives. Already a situation has arisen in practise which is inconsistent with one of the stated tenets of the policy - namely that in implementing Roman Catholic secondary school funding the viability of the public secondary school system would not be affected. In Metropolitan Toronto the public secondary schools will lose 2,900 students to the separate system by September 1986. Roman Catholics accounted for 31 percent of the Toronto secondary school students in 1985.

Applying inviting policy analysis to this issue implies that the policy, had it been a public creation, would be a transformative guideline (assuredly taking time to develop) as opposed to being an uninviting, vague, ill-timed, poorly researched, inaccurate and imposed policy destined to create a sense of powerlessness and anger in citizens.

Summary

A few examples have been given to demonstrate the application of the criteria for inviting educational policy development to classroom, boardroom, and provincial situations. All indicate and reaffirm the need for an inviting stance construing policy development as a public creation. Such a creation is based on able, responsible, and affected persons becoming a public and communicating through the skills of persuasion and argument to resolve problems and create transformative policies. The creation of such publics is not easy. We have argued that for those who are trying to seriously implement an inviting perspective, it is, however, a worthwhile endeavour.

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